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A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED ON THE

FAST-DAY in FEBRUARY 1799,

IN THE

CHURCH OF ST. LAWRENCE,

WINCHESTER.

By the Rev. HENRY GABELL, A. B. *Rector*,

SECOND MASTER OF WINCHESTER-SCHOOL,

AND FORMERLY FELLOW OF NEW-

COLLEGE, OXFORD.

THE SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

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R. NOBLE, Printer, Great Shire-Lane.

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By the Rev. Henry Cavendish, A.B. Rector.

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THE following discourse may be thought too political for the pulpit. I might urge, in my defence, that our political, form an important class of our moral, obligations; and that it is the office of a minister, to enforce the whole duty of man. I might alledge, that the occasion of this particular discourse was decidedly political. But the best apology is to be drawn from the peculiar circumstances of the times. When political theories are recommended to the world, which involve the destruction of Christianity, there seems to be no other effectual way of defending our religion against that particular mode of attack, than by exposing the falsehood of such theories; nor does that preacher exceed the bounds of his duty, who intrenches no farther upon politics, than is necessary for that purpose.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THE following discourse may be thought too political for the pulpit. I might urge in my defence, that our political, form an important class of our moral obligations; and that it is the office of a minister to enforce the whole duty of man. I might allege, that the occasion of this particular discourse was decidedly political. But the best apology is to be drawn from the peculiar circumstances of the times. When political theories are recommended to the world, which involve the destruction of Christianity, there seems to be no other effectual way of defending our religion against that particular mode of attack, than by exposing the fallacy of such theories; not does that preacher exceed the bounds of his duty, who intercedes no further upon politics, than is necessary for that purpose.

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A DISCOURSE, &c.

PSALM ii. Verse 1.

Why do the people imagine a vain thing?

AMIDST all our political dissentions, there is one truth, in which contending parties are unhappily agreed, that the present disordered state of public affairs justifies the most melancholy apprehensions.

Nor does the prospect brighten, when we look beyond our own shores, to the train of events that has been long passing on the theatre of Europe. Whichever way we turn our eyes, all is misrule and uproar. The nations of the earth *rage furiously together; the people imagine a*

vain thing. The people are under an illusion, the most powerful that ever seduced the mind of man, the foulest that ever was engendered among the corruptions of a sinking state. Who sees not, that popular licentiousness, and popular crime, and almost popular madness, have disordered the frame of society, and filled the earth with civil violence? It seems as if the fountains of all political evil were broken up. Nations desolated, and kingdoms overthrown! Empire after empire, swallowed up and lost, with all their laws, all their tribunals, all their institutions, civil and religious! Since the irruption of the Northern Hordes, history records no era so generally calamitous.

Yet these are the effects * of neither hurricane,

* It transports us beyond the bounds of patience, to hear the champions of this philosophy, while they admit in their candour that its principles have been misapplied, contend at the same time that we are not to argue from the abuse, against the use, of them; that the present disorders of Europe are transient, and will soon subside into the most beautiful arrangements of social life.

Whether these volcanic revolutions and earthquakes may

ricane, nor earthquake, nor any other great convulsion in the natural world. They are the fruits, whether of human folly, or of human wickedness, God only knows, moulded into system, and called, by the madness of the hour, Philosophy. Merciful Father! withdraw not, we beseech thee, thy Providence from the administration of this world, nor abandon us, in thine anger, to the powers of darkness, or the fiercer tyranny of human passions. The thought, if it were to fasten upon the mind, would make us desperate. It never overshadows the imagination for a moment without raising such terrors in the soul, as Religion alone can calm, by assuring us, that it is "Through God's high sufferance, for the trial of man,"

may clear the political atmosphere for after-ages, and ultimately meliorate the condition of man, is known only to the Supreme Disposer of events. There is, however, reason to fear, that in the mixed concerns of human life, the use and the abuse of this philosophy cannot be separated; that it is, in a practical sense, essentially wicked. Of this, however, I am sure, that for any human being, entrusted with civil authority, to presume in the drunkenness of a metaphysical delirium, to truck and squander the happiness of a whole generation, for what all allow to be a future, contingent, speculative good, is the summit of human arrogance.

and

and through the mysterious workings of Divine Wisdom, for his ultimate good, that these things are.

In the prosecution of this subject, I shall endeavour,

I. First, to answer the question, *Why* do the people imagine a vain thing?

II. Secondly, to shew that the thing which the people imagine, is really *vain*;

III. And I shall conclude with an address to the hearts and consciences of Englishmen.

I. First, I am to answer the question, *Why* do the people imagine a vain thing? or in other words, What are the causes which have occasioned the rise, and favoured the progress of the new philosophy *?

* The prevalence of the new philosophy, is considered by one of its *advocates*, as an argument for its truth. What? Is it come to this, that the test of truth is vulgar credulity? Not without reason, it seems, has the new school of religion and politics been accused of railing against superstition in the spirit of monks.

History will record, for the instruction of future ages, and the everlasting disgrace of the present, that Europe, at the close of the eighteenth century, in all the pride and presumption of superior wisdom, was betrayed into a philosophy, the wildest and maddest, to say nothing of its wickedness, that ever mocked the credulity of the human understanding. It is now about forty years, since a cabal * of philosophers, or to speak more properly, a *sect* of *philosophizing Fanatics*, having contrived, by the witchcraft of their eloquence, and other far less honourable artifices, to possess themselves of the public ear, and to point the passions and enthusiasms of men to their secret views, promulgated to the world a new scheme of society, upon new principles; principles, in the arrogant cant of their metaphysics, exclusively liberal, enlightened, and benevolent.

* According to Fontenelle, twenty eminent philosophers, acting in concert, need not despair of convincing all Europe, that the presence of the sun is not the cause of day-light. A feeble image this, of human credulity, compared with what the present age might have supplied, when a literary junto seems to have half-persuaded Europe, that atheism is good for man.

To dispel, by their radiance, the mists of human error; to soften, by their mildness, the ruggedness of our natures; to re-organize, by some wondrous, plastic power, the whole political and moral world; such were the dreams of alchymistical statesmen and philosophers.

Yet no sooner did their philosophy begin to operate upon real life, than instead of dispensing health and cheerfulness, like the great luminary of heaven, it deluged Europe with blood; and threatens in its progress to depopulate the fairest parts of the earth. It seems as if the machinations of these conspirators were not to be frustrated by the wisdom of human counsels. They have contrived an engine, more formidable than the cannon, for subjugating the *mind* of man. All the lowest artifices of popular delusion, they have digested into system; and found security for the establishment of an intellectual tyranny, in all the corruptions, and sometimes in the virtues, of our weak, fallen natures. "He that goeth about to persuade a multitude that they are misgoverned, shall never want favourable hearers*."

* Hooker.

This mixed multitude of mankind they have divided into classes, and appropriated to each its peculiar mode of seduction. The tacticks of the Rights of Man furnish them with stratagems adapted to every age, temper, or condition. To the indigent, they promise plunder; to the ambitious, power; to the envious, the fall of greatness: honour to the traitor; to the assassin, if the blood spilled be royal, immortal glory; to the wicked in general, release from all moral obligation here, and beyond the grave, impunity and everlasting sleep.

These are baits to catch the mean, gross, and profligate. But the master art is that by which they frequently seduce the benevolent and the well-disposed to embark as accomplices in the conspiracy. No age is more exposed to their subtle practices, than youth, which is the season of virtuous feeling; and among our youth none more than they, who unite in the same character, a fondness for philosophical research, with a judgment not yet rectified by study and the habit of reasoning; a susceptible, benevolent heart, with a fervent, ill-regulated imagination. Were the mirror of their minds sufficiently

ficiently enlarged, to present a whole-length view of that gigantic system of tyranny which crushes the world, they would sooner hide themselves in solitude, and break up society, than maintain it upon such principles.

But the corrupters of innocence are deeply versed in the wiles of rhetoric; the preachers of revolution never open their commission bluntly; never prelude with the war-hoop of rebellion. No! The vigilance of the understanding must be lulled with softer accents. The natural rights of man wrested from the iron hand of the oppressor! War and civil violence, with oppressive taxes and poverty in their rear, banished from the face of the earth! Patriotism expanded into the pure, ethereal spirit of universal love! The blessings of Providence equally distributed among the sons of men! Reason acknowledged as the guide of human life! Fascinating sounds! Peace! Philanthropy! Equality! The rights of man! The age of reason! When these topics are severally heightened by the richest colourings of eloquence, he who at first sight is not touched with such
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lovely images, is below the common level of our nature. But if our youth seriously mistake these fair semblances, these beautiful pictures, these poetic fictions, for things real, substantial, practicable; if they suffer the sound of their persuasive words, their melodious notes of fraternal love and zeal for the service of man, and indignation at his wrongs, to steal into their hearts; from that hour, Farewel to Britain! Her race of glory is run. *On the day that she shall eat of that fruit she shall surely die.*

II. Secondly, I am to shew that the thing which the people imagine, is really vain; in other words, that the new philosophy is false.

Distinctly to unfold, indeed, all its fallacies, would be to traverse a boundless field. From the five leading principles, peace, philanthropy, equality, the rights of man, the age of reason, I shall select one, which I have never yet seen fully discussed, probably because its evil tendency and connection with the general system are not evident at first sight, namely, Philanthropy; and I shall offer afterwards a few strictures on
Peace,

Peace, and Equality, omitting altogether, as too extensive for our present consideration, the doctrines of the rights of man *,

* *Man did not enter society to diminish, but to increase, the number of his natural rights.* This assertion, couched, to the best of my recollection, in these very words, is the foundation of the new doctrines about the Rights of Man. One is ashamed to refute so pitiful a sophism. Who so ignorant of the principles of civil government, as not to know, that man, when he quitted a state of nature, renounced many of his natural rights? He renounced, for instance, the right of pursuing his own will in all things, uncontrouled by human laws. He renounced the right of executing justice with his own hands, when injured, on the person of the offender. He renounced the right of free commonage over the earth. Has he not then diminished the number of his natural rights? He is amply recompensed by the security of his person and property, which before were unsafe and unsecure. "No man, that considers a moment, would wish to retain the absolute and uncontrouled power of doing whatever he pleases: the consequence of which is, that every other man would also have the same power; and then there would be no security to individuals in any of the enjoyments of life. Political therefore, or civil, liberty, which is that of a member of society, is no other than natural liberty so far restrained by human laws (and no farther) as is necessary and expedient for the general advantage of the public. Hence we may collect that the law which restrains a man from doing mischief to his fellow citizens, though it diminishes the natural, increases the civil liberty of mankind." Blackstone's Commentaries, B. I. c. 1.

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and the age of reason †. First for Philanthropy.

That passion which has ever been cherished and cultivated by great legislators as the most generous and useful in the human breast, the love of our country, is expunged

† As Christianity, upon the new system, is folly, the age of reason stands opposed and contrasted, in the philosophic vocabulary, to that of Christianity.

Having abolished the Christian Religion by law, what means will these fantastic legislators adopt in its stead, to regulate the disorderly affections of our nature? Will they find a fit instrument in Deism or Natural Religion?

In the first place, none but men of argument and study are capable of understanding its principles. How are the unlearned to be kept honest? Do they think to tie up the hands of the ignorant thief in metaphysical chains of argument, drawn from the immutable relations of justice?

But secondly, if it were possible to enforce the duties of life on the bulk of mankind, by means of Deism, they have neglected the proper means for that end. They have established no national church for the conservation of its principles, no particular order of men for the performance of its offices; without which it might easily be shewn, that Deism must soon degenerate into Atheism. Better for France, to consecrate her cathedrals to Jupiter Ammon, and all the refuse gods of her Egypt; better offer up human sacrifices to Moloch on the altar of Notre Dame, than become a nation of Atheists. The worst religion, says a great Divine, is better than none.

by

by these enlightened philosophers from the catalogue of human virtues, as hostile to the general interests of humanity. Patriotism is, upon their system, a narrow, local scheme of relations, invented by the policy of kings, to keep the dupes of their craft in servitude. Still more so, upon the philanthropic principle, are all other more partial attachments;

“ All the charities

“ Of Father, Brother, Son.”

These vain fumes of the imagination, so apt to cloud the unphilosophic mind, are not however to be destroyed. By some strange process of civic education, they are to be refined and exalted into general philanthropy.

It is to be remarked, that this doctrine is ever carefully inculcated in the first stage of political seduction. By destroying the best cement of the social union, they evidently intend to loosen the frame of society, and render it incapable of resisting the further inroads of their philosophy, whether left to its own operation, or combined with physical force. If such be the effect of this doctrine,

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doctrine, let us examine the foundation on which it stands.

What is patriotism? Is it not the interest we feel for the country in which we have spent our days, for the scenes with which we have associated all the pleasing recollections of childhood and youth, in preference to those countries, which we have never seen, or seen only after our most powerful associations were formed? Is it not the interest we feel for a people among whom we have lived, whose manners and language are similar to our own, in preference to other nations with whom we are little acquainted, and whose manners and language are different from our own? Is it not a sense of obligation to a particular society for benefits received; a gratitude, similar in kind to that which we owe to our parents and benefactors, though more sublime and heroic? If this be patriotism, if patriotism be in its nature a local and particular attachment, by what means shall we extend it universally to all countries and all persons? Only by extending the faculties of our bodies and our minds. Until these be sufficiently extended to make us acquainted with every

every country, and the manners of every country, with the private concerns and persons of many individuals in those countries, Philanthropy can never excite the livelier and warmer sympathies of patriotism.

Nor until our powers of communicating good be equally extended, is it to be wished that it could. Few have it in their power to do a service to all mankind. A parent may benefit his children, a statesman his country; but by what means can an individual benefit his whole species? Only by some great discovery. But such discoveries, experience has taught us, are so rare, and so casual, that few are sanguine enough to be powerfully influenced by the hope of success. General Philanthropy, therefore, can rarely prompt to any great exertion.

Besides, the object of philanthropy is too unlimited, and the views of the philanthropist consequently too indistinct, to become powerful principles of action; our attachments being always weak, in proportion as their objects are general.

Thus philanthropy being substituted in
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the place of more partial attachments, and the motives of the Philanthropist weakened by two causes, the indistinctness of his views, and the improbability of accomplishing them, what would be the effect? That every individual would bend all his endeavours towards benefiting himself alone, and man become wholly selfish.

Man is a limited animal; and the numerous rivers, mountains, and seas, which intersect the habitable globe, tell us that he was designed to be a member of a limited society. To regulate the general concerns of humanity, is the department, not of man, but of God.

Yet although the Author of our natures seems to have intended our native country for the peculiar object of our beneficence, he has by no means excluded from the system of our affections, humanity to aliens and strangers. That there is room in the human heart for the whole family of the social virtues, for filial, conjugal, and parental love, for friendship, for patriotism, and at the same time for benevolence to all our fellow-creatures, we know and feel; and

our own natural feelings are safer guides than French metaphysics.

There are, however, artificial means for weakening, though not extinguishing, the love of our country. What those are, is but too well known to the legislators of France. The most powerful are to force a change of manners, and even language, to alter the names and colours of things, and so break the earliest associations of ideas, destroy, as it were, a part of the mind itself, and then fill up the void with shows, and processions, and ceremonies, and those other allurements of the eye and ear. If any man meditate the overthrow of his country, let him carefully study the whole of this important chapter in the new Philosophy.

Under this head, I shall only remark further, that they who for revolutionary purposes first conjured up this fallacy, were themselves obliged to dismiss it, as soon as it had performed its appointed task. So completely was the public strength withered by its malignant influence, that the people of that country for a long time seemed unable to resist foreign attack; and it was only by
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resuming the very principle they had abjured, by rekindling, not indeed a genuine love of their country, for that is ever rational, just, and regardful of the rights of others, but what served their turn much better, that degenerate spurious patriotism, the spirit of national vain-glory, that they were enabled to rouse the military genius of the people. Thus is their doctrine belied by the success of their arms.

The next of their chimerical projects, on which I am to offer a few strictures, is that of perpetual peace. In the days of their promised millennium, the sound of war shall be no more heard upon earth, the very terms of the military art become obsolete among men. Yes. When ambition and avarice, and every other turbulent inmate of the human breast, when these the causes of war shall be extinct, then shall war also be extinct. But until that period shall arrive, although every revolution of the sun be attended by a revolution of the state, it is an eternal immutable law of our nature, that the political, as well as natural, body, shall be subject to periodical ravages, by the sword, and by the pestilence. As sickness

is to health, and nearly in the same proportion, so is war to peace; evils both, but evils inherent in humanity. To be dissatisfied, therefore, with our political condition, because it exempts us not from casualties inseparable from the nature of society, what is it but to contend against truth and heaven?

It is by no means my design, to discourage any rational scheme for preventing the incessant waste of life by human violence. Far am I from wishing to preclude the people of England from any real improvements in the art of civil government. I hope to see the day, when it may be safe to repair the gradual decays that time, or wilful waste, may have committed on the walls of our constitution. But I dare not, with the fear of God before my eyes, lift an arm against that last refuge and noblest fortress of liberty, merely because I hear the storm of war beat against the battlements. The elevation of its site, and the massy grandeur of its turrets, may perhaps attract the thunder-cloud: but if you will have solidity, and height, and grandeur, you are, by the laws of nature, exposed to these dangers.

This, like most of the new principles, is
not

not only philosophically false, but perfectly irreconcilable with the conduct of its authors. These preachers of moderation and forbearance have contrived to crowd into the space of a few years, more instances of national intolerance, insolence, and tyranny, than are to be found during the same space, in the annals of kingly government. Witness their conduct towards America, Switzerland, Egypt, and our own country. Because forsooth, our stubborn English hearts are hardened against the Philosophic Faith; because we will not fall down and worship the gods of their new Pantheon, and offer up in solemn sacrifice at the shrine of their deified philosophers, our laws, and liberties, and constitution, civil and religious, which we have received from our forefathers, and which our children will claim at our hands, as their rightful, hereditary freehold; we are to be converted, if not by argument and reason, at least by force of massacre and desolation.

History teaches us, that no form of government is more susceptible of a spirit of tyranny, than the Democratic; and, if we may judge by the experience of a few years, the boasted discovery in modern politics, the Representative

Representative Democracy, far from an exception to the general rule, is of all others the most ferocious and sanguinary.

The Deceivers and Oppressors of mankind not only violate, but in some instances seem to disown their own principles. Individuals, who in their former low condition were the loudest in the cry of Equality, having risen into place and power, and gotten by rapine what others possessed by law, have changed their principles with their fortunes, and renounced the doctrine of Equality. The word, indeed, still rings in our ears ; it stands conspicuous as a formulary at the head of their edicts ; it waves on their military banners in letters of gold. But the substance they have explained and quibbled away. By equality, they no longer mean equality ; by a term general and absolute, without reservation or restriction, we are now to understand, forsooth, something particular ; some particular sort of Equality ; equal law, equal liberty, equal rights to unequal things, any thing or nothing, just as their able commentators on this side of the water supply them with sophistries to justify their treacherous tergiversations. Jugglers and Impostors ! You have
duped

duped and fooled mankind by a studied and fraudulent ambiguity! You govern the world by an equivocal! You have founded your republic on a lie!

Thus, if we may judge of their other principles from those we have examined, whether we appeal to reason, or the experience of modern philosophers, modern philosophy is alike *vain* and impracticable.

III. But suppose we are not warranted to draw this general conclusion from a partial view of the subject; suppose the great modern experiment in politics to be not yet fully made; what have Britons to do with such dangerous novelties? Is our political condition so desperate, that the advantages of revolution are likely to outweigh the miseries of civil disturbance? If so, I know of no law of rational morality that enjoins longer obedience. I go farther. I aver that we are authorized by * God himself to overturn the

* I do not mean to say, that we are positively authorized by the written law. "We affirm, that as to the extent of our civil rights and obligations, Christianity hath left us where she found us; that she has neither altered, nor ascertained

the government, and erect a better on its ruins. But are we sure our condition is so desperate?

certained it ; that the New Testament contains not one passage, which fairly interpreted, affords either argument or objection applicable to any conclusions upon the subject that are deduced from the law and religion of nature." Paley's *Philosophy*, Book vi. Chap. iv. where the subject is discussed at large.

" Men consult Scripture, says Balguy, for what is not to be found in it ; an accurate description of their rights and duties : whereas the knowledge of these is supposed, not taught, by the sacred writers. There was a time, when men were under the same delusion with regard to their civil obligations : when both the origin and form of government, the extent of authority and degree of subjection, were determined not from the reasons of things, or the laws of particular nations, but from the precedents and precepts contained in the Bible ; a book never intended for such purpose, and much injured by the artifice and violence with which it has been pressed into a foreign service." Balguy's *Sermons*, Discourse vi.

The truth of the last remark is strikingly confirmed by late experience. Several of the French Clergy are said to have inculcated the indefeasible right of kings, and other political doctrines, as essential to Christianity. They chose to stake their religion on their politics. What is the consequence ? Their politics are rooted out of France, and Christianity with them. Men will sooner believe that the Christian Religion is false, than that it is unlawful to resist oppression.

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desperate? Enjoying, as the meanest of us do, the fullest and most complete security for

the abstract question of resistance to the civil powers had for ever slept; since whenever that desperate measure is justifiable, the necessity of the times must and will force the people upon it, whether the right be previously acknowledged by philosophers or not. The misfortune is, that by harping for ever on the right of resisting Government under particular circumstances, the people are prepared to resist when not warranted by the circumstances of the case. Fill their heads with Revolution, and Revolution will be the remedy for every slight disorder in the body politic, every petty abuse of power, every imperfection inseparable from human government. Just as the physician who has devoted an extraordinary proportion of his time to the study of some favourite medicine of acknowledged efficacy in extreme cases, is apt to administer it in all kinds of disorders without distinction.

But as the doctrine of revolution is gone forth, and the mischief done, it may be safer to admit, than to deny, what indeed seems to be philosophically true, the right of resisting our civil Governors, then, and then only, when resistance is conducive to the public happiness. See Paley, Vol. II.

Upon this principle, thus limited, the people of England at this time have assuredly no such right.

Upon the same principle, considering the corruptions of the French monarchy, with the probability, not to say moral certainty there seemed to be, although falsified by subsequent events, that the representative wisdom of a great nation would have been able to keep power out of
bad

for the protection of our lives, persons, and properties; security, against the infliction of death,

bad hands, many true friends of religion and liberty thought a revolution in that country, not only allowable, but laudable. In human affairs, however, success and miscarriage are no true tests of wisdom and virtue. It is difficult to suppose any man wicked enough to have plunged that country into such unexampled calamities, with his eyes open to the actual consequences.

But while I maintain the lawfulness of resistance in extreme cases, God forbid I should assert with the maniacs of France, that the people are invested with power to cashier their Governors, and abrogate their Government, *at their mere will and pleasure*. With *power* do they say? Insidious term! Power, it has been observed, means indifferently either physical strength, or political right.

These doubtful terms, and double meanings, if casual, argue a woful want of precision for philosophers; if wilful, disclose the most criminal views.

That the people, in point of physical strength, are competent to destroy, is undeniably true. But when pressed, these gentlemen are forced to admit they mean political right.

Now as justice, upon every true theory of government, is inseparably annexed to policy, every political, is also a moral, right.

So then the people are invested with a *moral* right to cashier their governors, and abrogate their government, at their mere will and pleasure.

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death, banishment, or other pains and penalties, except by the lawful judgment of our peers; security against arbitrary imprisonment, unless when the legislature has declared the state to be in danger; security against insult; security against slander and defamation; security against indigence, by our humane provision for the poor. For all which rights, our security is in the laws; and the laws are confirmed and assured to us by the freedom of the press; which, if they were endangered, would instantly spread the alarm, and rouse in their defence all the spirit and virtue of the kingdom. Such is our protection, for the most part, against *regal* despotism. Is our condition so desperate?

We have also constitutional barriers against the inroads of *popular* despotism; such as, if the common-wealth were actually dissolved, and the people met at this hour in

The proposition, as it now stands, is neither false nor wicked; it is only impenetrable nonsense; a contradiction in terms. Asserting the existence of a moral right, it admits the existence of moral duty in civil affairs, right and duty being correlative terms. Again, asserting a right to act at *their mere will and pleasure*, that is, independently of all considerations of duty, it disowns the obligation it had just before acknowledged.

solemn convention freely and deliberately to settle their future plan of government, they would probably think fit to re-institute. They would be advised, no doubt, by ignorant quacks and pretenders, and all who are enamoured with the beauty of their ideal system, to reserve the sovereign power in their own collective body. But the people of England know themselves and the nature of man. They know that in pure democracies the people are frequently instigated by envy, jealousy, or rapaciousness, to misuse their power, and tyrannize over those who by their industry, or talents, have risen to opulence and distinction. Since therefore (would they say) we cannot depend upon our own justice and forbearance, the stability of the state requires a security against our capricious imperious wills. We will therefore voluntarily subject ourselves to a controuling power. We will have in our constitution a Parliamentary House of Peers. We will hold them high in honour, if on no other account, yet on this, that the prejudices inseparable from their order will counteract our own levelling, equalizing disposition.

And

And, further, since bodies so heterogeneous tend mutually to repel and destroy each other, we will unite and hold them together by the chain of monarchical power.

Thus would the commons of England probably reason on the institution of King and Lords, if left to themselves and their own natural sense, neither controuled by foreign influence, nor intimidated by the insolence of factious clubs and societies. Would they reason ill? Would this language prove them unacquainted with the nature and end of civil government?

This strong democratic spirit, thus mitigated and diluted, is the life-blood of the English character, and individually, of that high, independent mind, which comprizes in itself all the severer virtues. This high-mindedness, which cannot submit to injury, which prefers danger to infamy, and honour to the conveniences of life, is as useful, as it is splendid. It has taught us that national peace and safety are not to be purchased by ignominious concessions to a haughty domineering foe; and that for the councils of a great nation to recede from the exactness of

of established decorums and ceremonials, is only to pave the way for fresh degradations. These are the fruits of our political condition. Is it indeed so desperate?

What, if the supreme power were vested exclusively in King or Nobles, as in most of the nations on the continent? Would not that be worse?

What if the sovereignty of these realms were usurped by the lower powers of the state? If all the vice and faction of the country were organized into gangs of legislators, with the whole wealth of the kingdom at their command, burdening our property with fines, requisitions, and confiscations; breaking our proud spirits to the yoke by the rigours of long imprisonment, or delivering us over to military execution or judicial assassination, without confronting us with our accusers, without form or colour of law? What, if in every district of the kingdom, all who are kept honest only by their own cowardice, and live in a state of constant irritation against the wholesome coercions of law, were let loose upon good men, their natural enemies, to exercise private vengeance,

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vengeance, under the mask of public justice? What, if to complete our miseries, we had lost the liberty of the press, and were denied the last consolation of the wretched, the sympathy of our fellow-sufferers? Answer to your conscience, every man that hears me. Is our's the worst of governments? Is the British constitution radically unfavourable to human happiness? There is but one class of men, who are incompetent to form a just judgment on the case: those who, in all deep and difficult questions, want capacity or opportunity to think and judge for themselves. Are there any such among you? They are doomed by heaven to take their political opinions upon trust, rather than reason. Do they presume to justify apostacy and disloyalty, by alledging the conviction of their consciences? How came Ignorance by such conviction? Have you thoroughly investigated the nature of civil government? Have you, of all theories, disentangled the most complicated? Of all sciences *, fathomed the most profound? Have

* If there be any thing of abstruse or difficult in the study of politics, the ignorant can be no competent judges of our highest political controversies. Hence
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Have you, during the investigation, kept strict watch over your minds, and preserved that reason which God gave you to be the

it seems to follow, that a government founded on universal suffrage is founded on ignorance. Reduced to the dilemma, either of denying the premises, or of giving up their favourite principle, modern republicans have chosen the former. They have entrenched themselves behind a proposition, that is contradicted by the experience of all ages, and by the common sense of mankind; that the art of civil government is easily intelligible to a plain understanding, without the aid of learning, without much profundity of thought. A man of considerable talents among them peremptorily asserts, that no greater capacity is requisite for governing a kingdom, than for managing the concerns of a private family. Similar sentiments have been echoed and re-echoed from the gardens of Fernay to the groves of the Palais Royale, and thence through all the affiliated societies of Europe. The same note has gently vibrated on the public ear from the walls of St. Stephen. Not so the venerable Hooker. "Easier a great deal is it for men by law to be taught what they ought to do, than instructed how to judge as they should do of law: the one being a thing which belongeth generally unto all, the other such as none but the wiser and more judicious sort can perform. Yea the wisest are always touching this point, the readiest to acknowledge that *soundly to judge of law is the weightiest thing which any man can take upon him.*" Hooker's Ecclesiastical Pol. V. i. p. 282. Oxford edit. Est senatori necessarium nosse rempublicam; idque late patet:—genus hoc omnes scientiæ, diligentia, memoria est; sine quo paratus esse senator nullo pacto potest. Cicero de leg. 3. 18.

guide

guide of life, free, firm, and erect, against the subtle artifices of sophistry, and the still more delusive logic of your own passions? If you have done all this, and are convinced, nevertheless, that apostacy and disloyalty are your bounden duty, it is well. Forsake your king. Disown your God.

If you have not done all this, go, and ask advice of those whom common fame points out as the honestest and wisest of your neighbours. And if you err in consequence of their advice, you may reasonably hope for pardon before the throne of mercy.

To deprecate such infatuation from these happy islands, thousands of our countrymen, at this same hour, are lifting up their hands with us to heaven, in one great act of national devotion, with prayers, and fastings, and contritions.

And since God, in the ordinary course of his providence, governs the world by the operation of second causes, rather than by the immediate interposition of his arm, and wills public virtue to be the instrument and measure of public prosperity; let us, on our parts, as the only means of saving our country

from destruction, cleanse and purify our affections from every wild, every selfish passion; on the one hand, from the lust of power or honours, from the venal exercise of our civil rights, from the * arrogance of rank or wealth,

* I am far from wishing to confound the several orders of society. The distinction is founded in nature. Between him "*who gaineth wisdom by opportunity of leisure; and him that holdeth the plough, and glorieth in the goad; that driveth oxen, and is occupied in their labours; and whose talk is of bullocks,*" there can be little congeniality of sentiment; because their minds have few images in common for intercourse of thought. Nor is it possible for the benevolent man, who has refined the natural sensibility of his temper by the artificial rules or habits of good-breeding, and is accustomed to regulate his behaviour by a delicate attention to the feelings of others, to be much pleased with the society of the churl, who understands not, or sets at defiance all the minor duties and decencies of social life. Between the ignorant and the intelligent, the rude and the gentle, there is little room for that sympathy which is the foundation of our personal attachments. Here then runs a line of demarcation, drawn by nature, throughout the whole extent of society. Woe to the people who confound by their false politics things so distinct, and frame their civil polity on the supposition that no such distinction exists. The only difficulty is, how to class particular men, or sets of men.

In the early history of Europe, when society settled into those modes and habits of life which remain without much variation to the present day, no manual or mercantile occupation, carried on upon small capital, with slender profit, left leisure to those employed in it, to polish their minds by the more liberal, or their manners by the more graceful

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wealth, from all uncharitableness; on the other hand, from envy, jealousy, and the rage of disappointed ambition, from an over-weening confidence in our own wisdom, and an insolent contempt for that of others, from that treacherous, neutral indifference, which under the covert of moderation, extenuates the guilt of rebellion; from the result of all

accomplishments. But the times are changed. The merchants and traders of this age, have, many of them, leisure and opportunity for reflection, and literature, and all those elegant acquirements, which, when combined with virtue, entitle men to place and honour. Their titles, however, you dispute. Their claims you reject. They are soured and disgusted. I assert, not from theory, but observation, as far as my narrow sphere of observation reaches, that the political discontents of our merchants are founded, in great measure, on a just resentment of such arrogance. More perhaps have been jacobinized by the little galling aristocracies of private life, than by any public grievance whatever.

It should be recollected however by all such, that in civil affairs, resentment for personal injuries is not a more virtuous motive of conduct than regard to private profit. In either of these cases, the common good is sacrificed to selfish considerations.

They should consider also, that these petulancies which result from the weakness of our nature, receive no countenance from public opinion, and will perhaps be found to exist in a small degree, when we consider the number of individuals lifted into distinction by birth or opulence, who cannot all be equally supposed under the guidance of reason or moderation.

these, turbulence, disaffection, and the dangerous spirit of innovation; above all, from irreligion.

Let us remember, that without religion, we cannot possibly be free. To be free, is to be ruled by law, not by will. But as law, without the religion of oaths, can give no protection, a people without religion cannot be ruled by law. They must be ruled, like slaves, by arbitrary power. They must be driven, like brute beasts, by force and violence.

No nation upon earth had ever greater reason to be convinced of this, than our enemies. Happy will it be for them, if they profit by their experience, without protracting longer the dreadful experiment! A sincere conviction of that one truth would ensure the downfall of the reigning philosophy. May they learn from their misfortunes, that the great Social Good, the blessing which includes all other blessings, is Religion, acting upon Liberty, controlling her excesses, and awing her into moral order.

THE END.

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